Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

Frequency of Review:	Annually
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Adopted by the Board of Empower Trust	

Date of Review:	December 2025	**Changes Made:**	• Throughout policy - changed SEN to SEND and 'differentiation' to 'adaptive teaching'. • P5 - changed 'eating disorder' to 'disordered eating' [following new MH guidelines] • P8-10 - aligned graduated support with Trust SEND Handbook description, e.g. included 'Universal Plus' as a graduated response stage. • P10 - changed to 'needs led' and also aligned with Trust SEND Handbook info. Please note the adding of this statement within this section: *'The same adult will not be with the same child at all times'*
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1. Aims and objectives

Our special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) policy aims to:

- Ensure that all our schools fully implement national legislation and guidance regarding pupils with SEND

Set out how our schools will:

  - Support and make provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities
  - Provide pupils with SEND access to all aspects of school life so they can engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils who do not have SEND
  - Help pupils with SEND fulfil their aspirations and achieve their best
  - Help pupils with SEND become confident individuals living fulfilling lives
  - Help pupils with SEND make a successful transition into the next stage of their school life
  - Communicate with pupils with SEND and their parents or carers and involve them in discussions and decisions about support and provision for the pupil

- Explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing for pupils with SEND
- Communicate with, and involve, pupils with SEND and their parents or carers in discussions and decisions about support and provision for the pupil
- Make sure the SEND policy is understood and implemented consistently by all staff

2. Vision and values

As part of the Empower Trust mission, our vision is to ensure that every child experiences a consistently high-quality education – socially, morally and academically. We pledge to ensure all children become successful learners and develop into young people who contribute to our world and succeed in their ambitions.

3. Legislation and guidance

This is based on the statutory Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice and the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which sets out schools' responsibilities for pupils with SEND
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, which set out local authorities' and schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs) and the special educational needs (SEN) information report
- The Equality Act 2010 (section 20), which sets out the school's duties to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), which set out the school's responsibilities to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic (which includes having a disability) and those who don't share it
- The Governance Handbook, which sets out governors' & trustees' responsibilities for pupils with SEND
- The School Admissions Code, which sets out the school's obligation to admit all pupils whose education, health and care (EHC) plan names the school, and its duty not to disadvantage unfairly children with a disability or with special educational needs

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

4. Inclusion and equal opportunities

Across our trust schools, we strive to create an inclusive teaching environment that offers all pupils, no matter their needs and abilities, a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum. We are committed to offering all pupils the chance to thrive and fulfil their aspirations.

We are committed to making sure all our pupils have the chance to thrive and supporting them to meet their full potential.

We are focused on creating an inclusive environment, where provision is tailored to the needs and abilities of pupils, no matter how varied.

We will achieve this by making reasonable adjustments to teaching, the curriculum and the school environment to make sure that pupils with SEND are included in all aspects of school life.

5. Definitions

5.1 Special educational needs

A pupil has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability that requires special educational provision to be made for them.

They have a **learning difficulty or disability** if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age, or
- A disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools

Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools.

5.2 Disability

Pupils are considered to have a **disability** if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out daily activities.

The school will make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.

5.3 The 4 areas of need

The needs of pupils with SEND are grouped into 4 broad areas. Pupils can have needs that span across more than 1 area, and their needs may change over time.

Interventions will be selected that are appropriate for the pupil's particular area(s) of need, at the relevant time.

AREA OF NEED	
Communication and interaction	Pupils with needs in this area have difficulty communicating with others. They may have difficulty understanding what is being said to them, have trouble expressing themselves, or do not understand or use the social rules of communication. Pupils who are on the autism spectrum often have needs that fall in this category.

Cognition and learning	Pupils with learning difficulties usually learn at a slower pace than their peers. A wide range of needs are grouped in this area, including: • Specific learning difficulties, which impact 1 or more specific aspects of learning, such as: dyslexia, dyscalculia and Developmental Coordination Disorder (dyspraxia). • Moderate learning difficulties • Severe learning difficulties • Profound and multiple learning difficulties, which is where pupils are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment
Social, emotional and mental health	These needs may reflect a wide range of underlying difficulties or differences. Pupils may have: • Mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression or disordered eating • Attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) or attachment disorder • Experienced adverse childhood experiences These needs can manifest in many ways, for example as behaviours that challenge, or by the pupil becoming withdrawn or isolated. Behaviours may be internalised and/or externalised.
Sensory and/or physical	Pupils with these needs have a disability that hinders them from accessing the educational facilities generally provided. Pupils may have: • A sensory impairment such as vision impairment, hearing impairment or multi-sensory impairment • A physical impairment These pupils may need ongoing additional support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 The Trust Strategic Lead and Trust SENCO

The Trust Strategic Lead, Beck Preece, and Trust SENCO, Rachel Butterfield will oversee the delivery and development of SEND provision across the Trust.

They will:

- support schools on specific SEND issues; providing advice about how to proceed
- carry out annual SEND audits in each school
- monitor the provision of SEND
- monitor the compliance of Trust agreed processes
- ensure that each school is funded appropriately

6.2 The SENCO

The SENCO at our school is – Please see individual school websites.

They will:

- Inform any parents that their child may have SEND and then liaise with them about the pupil's needs and any provision made
- Work with the headteacher and SEND governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEND policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEN, including those who have EHC plans
- Provide professional guidance to colleagues and liaise and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to make sure that pupils with SEND receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching
- Advise on the graduated approach to providing SEND support and adaptive teaching methods appropriate for individual pupils
- Advise on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively
- Be a point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority (LA) and its support services, and work with external agencies to ensure that appropriate provision is provided
- Liaise with potential next providers of education to make sure that the pupil and their parents are informed about options and that a smooth transition is planned
- When a pupil moves to a different school or institution: Make sure that all relevant information about a pupil's SEND and the provision for them are sent to the appropriate authority, school or institution in a timely manner
- Work with the headteacher and school governors to make sure the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Make sure the school keeps its records of all pupils with SEND up to date and accurate
- With the headteacher, monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEND, and incorporate this into the school's plan for continuous professional development
- With the headteacher, regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the school offers or can access, and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the local offer
- Prepare and review information for inclusion in the school's SEND information report and any updates to this policy
- With the headteacher and teaching staff, identify any patterns in the school's identification of SEND, both within the school and in comparison, with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching

6.3 The governing board/board of trustees

The governing board / board of Trustees are responsible for making sure the following duties are carried out, though the duties can be delegated to a committee or an individual:

- Co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and developing the local offer
- Do all it can to make sure that every pupil with SEND gets the support they need
- Make sure that pupils with SEND engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils who don't have SEND
- Inform parents when the school is making special educational provision for their child
- Make sure that the school has arrangements in place to support any pupils with medical conditions
- Provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- Have a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND
- Provide an annual report for parents on their child's progress

- Record accurately and keep up to date the provision made for pupils with SEND
- Publish information on the school website about how the school is implementing its SEND policy, in a SEND information report
- Publish information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps taken to prevent disabled children being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access of disabled children, and the school's accessibility plans
- Make sure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for the school and that the key responsibilities of the role are set out, and monitor the effectiveness of how these are carried out
- Determine their approach to using their resources to support the progress of pupils with SEND

6.4 The SEND link governor

The SEND link governor is – Please see individual school websites.

The SEND governor will:

- Help to raise awareness of SEND issues at governing board meetings
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND provision within the school and update the governing board on this
- Work with the headteacher and SENCO to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school

6.5 The headteacher

The headteacher will:

- Work with the SENCO and SEND link governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision within the school
- Work with the SENCO and school governors to make sure the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Have overall responsibility for, and awareness of, the provision for pupils with SEND, and their progress
- Have responsibility for monitoring the school's notional SEND budget and any additional funding allocated by the LA to support individual pupils
- Make sure that the SENCO has enough time to carry out their duties
- Have an overview of the needs of the current cohort of pupils on the SEND register
- Advise the LA when a pupil needs an EHC needs assessment, or when an EHC plan needs an early review
- With the SENCO, monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs regarding SEN, and incorporate this into the school's plan for continuous professional development
- With the SENCO, regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the SEND support the school offers or can access, and co-operate with the LA in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the local offer
- With the SENCO and teaching staff, identify any patterns in the school's identification of SEN, both within the school and in comparison with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching

6.6 Class teachers

Each class teacher is responsible for:

- Planning and providing high-quality teaching that is adapted to meet pupil needs through a graduated approach
- The progress and development of every pupil in their class
- Working closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions, and consider how they can be linked to classroom teaching

- Working with the SENCO to review each pupil's progress and development, and decide on any changes to provision
- Ensuring they follow this SEND policy and the SEND information report
- Communicating with parents regularly to:
    - Set clear outcomes and review progress towards them
    - Discuss the activities and support that will help achieve the set outcomes
    - Identify the responsibilities of the parent, the pupil and the school
    - Listen to the parents' concerns and agree their aspirations for the pupil

6.7 Parents or carers

Parents or carers should inform the school if they have any concerns about their child's progress or development.

Parents or carers of a pupil on the SEND register will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about the pupil's SEND and the support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support. They will be:

- Invited to termly meetings to review the provision that is in place for their child
- Asked to provide information about the impact of SEND support outside school and any changes in the pupil's needs
- Given the opportunity to share their concerns and, with school staff, agree their aspirations for the pupil
- Invited to parental consultations throughout the year
- Given an annual report on the pupil's progress

The school will take into account the views of the parent or carer in any decisions made about the pupil.

6.8 The pupil

Pupils will always be given the opportunity to provide information and express their views about their SEND and the support provided. They will be invited to participate in discussions and decisions about this support. This might involve the pupil:

- Explaining what their strengths and difficulties are
- Contributing to setting targets or outcomes
- Attending review meetings
- Giving feedback on the effectiveness of interventions

The pupil's views will be taken into account in making decisions that affect them, whenever possible.

7. SEND information report

The school publishes a SEND information report on its website, which sets out how this policy is implemented in the school.

The information report will be updated annually and as soon as possible after any changes to the information it contains.

8. The graduated approach to SEND support

8.1 Identifying pupils with SEND and assessing their needs

Universal Offer

All pupils receive high quality and adaptive teaching through our Universal Offer.

We will assess each pupil's current skills and levels of attainment when they start at the school. This will build on information from previous settings and Key Stages, where appropriate. We will also consider any evidence that the pupil may have a disability and if so, what reasonable adjustments the school may need to make.

Class teachers will regularly assess the progress of all pupils and identify any whose progress:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Is not maintaining their previous rate of progress
  - Is not closing the attainment gap between them and their peers
  - Widens the attainment gap

This may include progress in areas other than attainment, for example, wider development or social and emotional needs.

Once concerns arise about the progress that a child is making, the Trust's SEND Handbook - Provision Map should be consulted and the following question considered:

Is the child accessing the provision detailed at the Universal Offer Stage?

Class staff then use the Provision Map to identify what else could be put in place to reduce barriers to learning.

All children should have access to quality first teaching in the classroom, which caters for their individual needs and supports them to make good progress.

Scaffolding and adaptation must be provided to enable all children to achieve the learning objective and gain knowledge.

It is not necessary to provide all listed within the Provision Map but, where they could help to overcome barriers to learning, they should be trialled consistently by all staff involved with the child.

Universal Plus Stage

If, after implementing the Universal Offer, children need additional support, they will receive time limited, targeted interventions to meet their needs and will move to the Universal + stage of our graduated approach.

Possible interventions can be found in the Trust SEND Handbook - Provision Map.

One cycle at Universal + stage should last approximately 6 weeks / half a term. The intervention should be evidence based and outcomes SMART. Interventions should be recorded and monitored by class teams.

Recording of baseline data, expected outcomes and progress should be clear.

At the end of approximately 6 weeks / half a term, progress will be assessed by class teams.

If required, at least one further cycle at Universal + should be completed. If progress does not improve, the teacher will raise the issue with the SENCO to have an initial discussion about whether this lack of progress may be due to a special educational need. Where necessary they will, in consultation with the pupil's parents or carers, consider a move to SEND Support stage.

Slow progress and low attainment will not automatically mean a pupil is recorded as having SEND.

Potential short-term causes of impact on behaviour or performance will be considered, such as adverse childhood experiences or low attendance. Staff will also take particular care in identifying and assessing SEND for pupils whose first language is not English.

When deciding whether the pupil needs special educational provision, we will start with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment, and the views and the wishes of the pupil and their parents. We will use this to determine the support that is needed and whether we can provide it through our Universal Plus offer, or whether something different or additional is needed through SEND Support stage.

If a pupil is joining the school, and:

- their previous setting has already identified that they have SEND
- they are known to external agencies
- they have an education, health and care plan (EHCP)

then the school will work in a multi-agency way to make sure we get relevant information before the pupil starts at school, so support can be put in place as early as possible.

SEND Support Stage

Following the graduated approach, if a pupil is move onto SEND Support stage, the Trust agreed Assess-Plan-Do-Review / Person Centred Plan document should be used to clearly show information about the pupil's needs, strengths and aspirations, as well as short term outcomes.

A cycle of Assess-Plan-Do-Review at this stage is a term. Outcomes should be SMART and interventions evidence based.

Pupils receiving SEND provision will be placed on the school's SEND register at code K. These pupils have needs that can be met by the school through the graduated approach. Where the pupil's needs cannot be adequately met with in-house expertise, staff will consider involving an external specialist as soon as possible.

The provision for these pupils is funded through the school's notional SEND budget.

If there are wider concerns about a child's needs at this stage, the Strategic Lead for SEND or the Trust SENDCo can be contacted. The Trust SENDCO, Rachel Butterfield, is able to carry out a range of assessments.

If specific support is required from Rachel, the Trust SENDCo Support Request Form should be completed and must include what has been implemented at different stages of the graduated response using the Trust SEND Handbook - Provision Map.

SEND Support Stage – Graduated Support Plan / Early Intervention Grant

Few pupils at SEND Support stage may require an enhanced level of funding to ensure that targeted interventions can continue to be provided, which exceed the school's notional SEND budget.

Applications for a Graduated Support Plan (GSP) or an Early Intervention Grant (EIG) are made by school to the Local Authority.

If a child has a Graduated Support Plan (GSP) or is in receipt of Early Intervention Grant (EIG), they remain at SEND Support stage; a GSP or EIG is an enhanced level of SEND Support.

On the census these pupils will be marked with the code K.

EHCP Support Stage

Very few pupils may need more support than is available through the school's school-based SEND provision may be entitled to an EHC plan. The plan is a legal document that describes the needs of the pupil, the provision that will be put in place, and the outcomes sought.

The provision for these pupils will be funded from the school's notional SEND budget, and potentially from the LA (from the high-level needs funding block of the dedicated schools grant). Each school will ensure that the appropriate level of funding is secured to provide the provision detailed through the EHCP (Section F).

At EHCP level, the Trust agreed APDR / PCP document should be used. A cycle at this stage is a term.

Where a child has an EHCP, the EHCP Long Term Outcomes (usually to be achieved by end of key stage) should be pulled from the document and broken down into yearly long term outcomes and termly short term outcomes. Termly reviews will take place and an annual review must be held, in line with statutory processes.

On the census these pupils will be marked with the code E.

8.2 Staffing for support

Staffing for support at SEND Support and EHCP level will follow the Needs Led Model. This will ensure that the right provision is delivered at the right time in the right way. This model is flexible to the demands of staffing changes and the needs of the school as a whole, as determined by the Head / SENCO, while also being more effective at providing for the needs of the child.

Across our schools all staff are expected to be able to provide the provision needed for all children and they will be supported to be able to do so through whole school and individual Continuous Professional Development.

A number of staff will be utilized throughout the day to provide the support for an individual children with SEND; the same adult will not be with the same child at all times. The plan for this will be drawn up by the class teacher with

support from the SENCO. This way of working ensures that children with SEND are able to build trusting and effective relationships with a range of adults and are therefore resilient and able to adapt when staff changes occur.

8.3 Consulting and involving pupils and parents

The school will put the pupil and their parents at the heart of all decisions made about special educational provision.

When we are aiming to identify whether a pupil needs special education provision, we will have an early discussion with the pupil and their parents. These conversations will make sure that:

- Everyone develops a good understanding of the pupil's areas of strength and difficulty
- We take into account any concerns the parents have
- Everyone understands the agreed outcomes sought for the child
- Everyone is clear on what the next steps are

Notes of these early discussions will be added to the pupil's record and given to their parents.

We will formally notify parents if it is decided that a pupil will receive special educational provision.

8.4 Assess-Plan-Do-Review

Once a pupil has been identified as having SEND, we will continue to take action to remove any barriers to learning and put effective provision in place. This support will be delivered through successive rounds of a 4-part cycle known as the graduated approach.

1. **Assess**

The pupil's class teacher and the SENCO will collate information that identifies the pupil's needs. The views of the pupil and their parents will be a key part of this collation of information. The school may also seek advice from external support services.

The assessment will be reviewed regularly to help make sure that the support in place is matched to the pupil's need. For many pupils, the most reliable way to identify needs is to observe the way they respond to an intervention.

2. **Plan**

In consultation with the parents and the pupil, the class teacher, supported by the SENCO will decide which adjustments, interventions and support will be put into place, the expected outcomes, and a clear date for review.

All staff who work with the pupil will be made aware of the pupil's needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches that are needed. This information will be recorded on our management information system and will be made accessible to staff in the form of a Pupil Centred Plan (PCP).

Parents will be fully aware of the planned support and interventions and will be asked and expected to reinforce or contribute to progress at home.

3. **Do**

The pupil's class teacher retains overall responsibility for their progress.

Where the plan involves group or individual teaching away from the main class, they still retain responsibility for the pupil. They will work closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff involved, to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching**.**

The SENCO will support the teacher in further assessing the pupil's particular strengths and needs, in problem solving and advising on how to implement support effectively.

4. **Review**

The effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the pupil's progress will be reviewed in line with the agreed date.

We will evaluate the impact and quality of the support and interventions. This evaluation will be based on:

- The views of the parents and pupils

- The level of progress the pupil has made towards their outcomes
- The views of teaching staff who work with the pupil

The teacher, with support from the SENCO will revise the outcomes and support in light of the pupil's progress and development, and in consultation with the pupil and their parents.

8.5 Evaluating the effectiveness of SEND provision

We evaluate the effectiveness of provision for pupils with SEND by:

- Tracking pupils' progress, including by using provision maps
- Carrying out the review stage of the graduated approach in every cycle of SEND support
- Using pupil questionnaires
- Monitoring by the SENCO
- Termly SEND Link Governor meetings and reports
- Holding annual reviews for pupils with EHC plans
- Getting feedback from the pupil and their parents
- Conducting annual SEN audits in each school

9. Expertise and training of staff

Generic SEND training will happen across all trust schools, led by the Trust Strategic Lead for SEND and the Trust SENCO.

Training specific to each school will be provided throughout the year to teaching and support staff. The headteacher and the SENCO will continuously monitor to identify any staff who have specific training needs and will incorporate this into the school's plan for continuous professional development.

Further information can be found in individual schools' SEND Information Reports.

10. Links with external professional agencies

The school recognises that at times, they need external support in order to meet all the needs of some pupils. Whenever necessary the school will work with external support services such as:

- Speech and language therapists
- Specialist teachers or support services
- Educational psychologists
- Occupational therapists, speech and language therapists or physiotherapists
- General practitioners or paediatricians
- School nurses
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Education welfare officers
- Children's services

11. Admission and accessibility arrangements

11.1 Admission arrangements

Children with an EHCP, which names a particular school, will be allocated places first, after which places are allocated according to an agreed set of criteria, in strict order of priority.

11.2 Accessibility arrangements

All of our schools aim to treat all its pupils fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all pupils without discrimination of any kind.

We value the contributions made by all children, professionals and parents to help develop our inclusive school community.

12. Complaints about SEND provision

Complaints about SEND provision in any of our schools should be made to the class teacher/SENCo/Headteacher in the first instance. If the complaint isn't resolved at that stage, the school's complaints policy will then be followed.

The parents of pupils with disabilities have the right to make disability discrimination claims to the first-tier SEND tribunal if they believe that our school has discriminated against their children. They can make a claim about alleged discrimination regarding:

- Exclusions
- Provision of education and associated services
- Making reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services

To see a full explanation of suitable avenues for complaint, see pages 246 and 247 of the SEN Code of Practice.

If you feel that our school discriminated against your child because of their SEND, you have the right to make a discrimination claim to the first-tier SEND tribunal. To find out how to make such a claim, you should visit: https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school/disability-discrimination

Before going to a SEND tribunal, you can go through processes called disagreement resolution or mediation, where you try to resolve your disagreement before it reaches the tribunal.

13. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

13.1 Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy

We are constantly looking for ways to improve our SEND policy. We will do this by evaluating whether or not we are meeting our objectives set out in section 1.

We will evaluate how effective our SEND provision is with regards to:

- All staff's awareness of pupils with SEND
- How early pupils are identified as having SEND
- Pupils' progress and attainment once they have been identified as having SEND
  - Whether pupils with SEND feel safe, valued and included in the school community
  - Comments and feedback from pupils and their parents

13.2 Monitoring the policy

This policy will be reviewed by the Strategic Lead and Trust SENCo **every year**. It will also be updated when any new legislation, requirements or changes in procedure occur during the year.

It will be approved by the full governing board.

14. Links with other policies and documents

This policy links to the following documents:

- SEND Information Report
- The local offer

- Accessibility plan
- Behaviour policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
- Attendance policy
- Safeguarding / child protection policy
- Complaints policy
- Empower Trust SEND Handbook